

That is what we asked for—to be in the Senate and make these tough choices.

I hope, in the hours that are ahead, we will be able to have some amendments—and there are several that would fix this and would allow the doctors to receive the pay they are entitled to—and they are entitled to it—but at the same time would not add to the debt.

I yield the floor.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. COATS). The clerk will call the roll.

The senior assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. SESSIONS. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

Mr. SESSIONS. Mr. President, I would just add that this isn't just my opinion about these cost overruns in the legislation. Here is a Wall Street Journal article from a few days ago: "Two-thirds of \$214 billion cost would be financed through higher deficits. . . ." That is the subheadline on that. The headline is: "Senate Wrangles Over Medicare-Payments Fix."

So I don't think there is any real doubt about that. The article goes on to say:

The deal reached by House leaders would shift some of those costs onto Medicare beneficiaries—

So some of the Medicare benefits, such as Part C, are not part of trust fund money. It is not paid for when you have that withholding from your paycheck, and people with higher incomes probably ought to pay a higher percentage of the cost that they can reasonably afford, if they have a higher income, when they go see a doctor. I think we could use that. But at any rate, this bill would shift some costs to Medicare beneficiaries. The article continues—

while providers such as hospitals also would shoulder some costs.

So they are paying for some of these costs by having reduction in payments to hospitals that are hurting this year. And the article states:

The rest would be financed through higher deficits.

No doubt about it.

Forbes magazine comments here in an article by Stan Collender, saying that "the procedural choices Congress is making all favor increasing the deficit rather than at least requiring it not get any worse."

This is what the article says about the SGR—the physician's payment: "The SGR change without a full offset is projected to add an average of around \$14 billion a year to the deficit."

Here is a headline from The Fiscal Times: "Medicare 'Doc Fix' May Be No Fix at All."

Paul Winfree, an economic policy expert with the Heritage Foundation, said this:

Rather than a permanent replacement to the Sustainable Growth Rate—

Remember, we have been promised this would be a permanent replacement—

it is much more likely that the House doc fix will be a shorter-term patch requiring another series of patchwork legislation just nine years from now.

They also conclude in this article that the permanent fix would "add \$141 billion to the deficit over the first 10 years and could go as high as \$500 billion over two decades, as previously reported here."

I did want to emphasize it is really not \$141 over 10 years, it is \$174, because when you add up \$141 billion in additional debt over 10 years, you pay interest on that. You borrow that money and pay interest, and when you calculate the interest that is paid, the increased interest is \$174 billion added to the total deficit of America.

Colleagues, our interest payment on our debt is staggering. The highway bill is about \$40 billion to \$50 billion a year. Aid to education is nearly \$100 billion a year, for example. The interest we pay annually on the current \$18 trillion debt, in spite of the fact we have some of the lowest interest rates we have ever had, was more than \$220 billion-plus last year.

The Congressional Budget Office, however, says that 10 years from now, with interest rates projected to return to the mean and with the deficit every year out for 10 years, we will be over \$900 billion in interest in the 10th year. That is just in 10 years. We go from \$200 billion to \$900-plus billion.

This is why the Congressional Budget Office Director, chosen by our Democratic colleagues, Dr. Elmendorf, a very capable, wise man, has said we are on an unsustainable path. This is a path of fiscal destruction. It is not responsible.

So day after day, week after week, we in Congress are going to have to start saying, no, we don't have the money. Do you not understand? We can't keep digging the hole deeper. We are supposed to be trying to figure out a way to reduce deficits and balance the budget, not to pass more legislation that is going to cost more money than we have to spend on these things. The only way we will be able to honor that legislation is to borrow more. That is what we are doing.

So I don't think there is any doubt about what I have said. If somebody can come down and prove this bill is paid for I will shake their hand and I will be happy because I want to do the doctors fix, and I want to be sure we do it in a responsible financial way. If not, we will have legislation, amendments will be offered that I think can fix it and that will require Congress to come up with the money in a proper way, do the assistance we need to provide to our doctors and not add to the debt.

I yield the floor.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The senior assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. CORNYN. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

CONCLUSION OF MORNING BUSINESS

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Morning business is now closed.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

NOMINATION OF ALFRED H. BENNETT TO BE UNITED STATES DISTRICT JUDGE FOR THE SOUTHERN DISTRICT OF TEXAS

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the Senate will proceed to executive session to consider the following nomination, which the clerk will report.

The legislative clerk read the nomination of Alfred H. Bennett, of Texas, to be United States District Judge for the Southern District of Texas.

Mr. CORNYN. Mr. President, we yield back all remaining time.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

All time is yielded back.

Mr. CORNYN. I ask for the yeas and nays.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there a sufficient second?

There appears to be a sufficient second.

The question is, Will the Senate advise and consent to the nomination of Alfred H. Bennett, of Texas, to be United States District Judge for the Southern District of Texas?

The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative clerk called the roll.

Mr. CORNYN. The following Senators are necessarily absent: the Senator from New Hampshire (Ms. AYOTTE), the Senator from Texas (Mr. CRUZ), the Senator from South Carolina (Mr. GRAHAM), the Senator from Florida (Mr. RUBIO), and the Senator from Pennsylvania (Mr. TOOMEY).

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. LANKFORD). Are there any other Senators in the Chamber desiring to vote?

The result was announced—yeas 95, nays 0, as follows:

[Rollcall Vote No. 136 Ex.]

YEAS—95

Alexander	Cassidy	Flake
Baldwin	Coats	Franken
Barrasso	Cochran	Gardner
Bennet	Collins	Gillibrand
Blumenthal	Coons	Grassley
Blunt	Corker	Hatch
Booker	Cornyn	Heinrich
Boozman	Cotton	Heitkamp
Boxer	Crapo	Heller
Brown	Daines	Hirono
Burr	Donnelly	Hoeven
Cantwell	Durbin	Inhofe
Capito	Enzi	Isakson
Cardin	Ernst	Johnson
Carper	Feinstein	Kaine
Casey	Fischer	King